The Effect of Smoke from Burning Vegetative Residues on Airway Inflammation and Pulmonary Function in Healthy, Asthmatic, and Allergic Individuals

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Introduction

- It is common practice worldwide to use open field burning for the clearance of agricultural fields.
- Burning reduces the high costs involved in both removing the crop residue post-harvest, and for pest and disease control.
- Rice is a major crop in California, particularly in the Central Valley region.
- There is concern that open field burning and subsequent smoke exposure in humans could result in adverse health effects.

Introduction

- When incorrect predictions (weather forecasts), or changes, in climatic conditions (wind direction, temperature inversions) occur, rice straw smoke (RSS) moves into inhabited areas.
- RSS contains potentially biologically toxic airborne respirable particles and gases.
  - Particles; carbon (C), nitrogen (N), sulfur (S)
  - Gases; carbon-monoxide (CO), carbon-dioxide (CO_2), oxides of nitrogen (NO_x).
- Currently, there is no specific data on the direct effect of RSS exposure on respiratory health.

Introduction; Epidemiology

- In Butte County, California, 1983-1992:
  - 690,000 acres of rice straw was burned (82% of the total planted acreage).
  - Maximum concentration of airborne particulate matter with a mean mass aerodynamic diameter (MMAD) < 10 mm (PM_{10}), was 636 $\mu g\ m^3$.
  - There was a significant increase in the risk for hospitalization, and asthma morbidity (Jacobs *et al.* 1997).

Introduction; Epidemiology

- In Winnipeg, Canada, October 1992:
  - RSS episode elevated levels of PM_{10}, to 200 μg m^3, and elevated carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, and volatile organic compounds (VOC).
  - In individuals with airway obstruction and airway hyper-reactivity; 42% had onset or worsened cough, wheezing, chest tightness, or shortness of breath, and 20% had trouble breathing during the episode.
  - Individuals with asthma or chronic bronchitis were most likely to be effected (Long *et al.* 1998).

Introduction; Epidemiology

- In Niigata Prefecture, Japan, 1994 to 1998:
  - RSS elevated PM_{10} to 410 $\mu g\ m^3$.
  - There was an increase in the number of asthma attack visits to the emergency room, and asthma attack hospital admissions in children.
  - There was also a significant correlation between the ambient concentration of PM_{10}, and the number of asthma attacks in children (Torigoe *et al.* 2000).

Introduction; Epidemiology

- In Isfahan, Iran, October 2000:
  - RSS episode resulted in total particulate and PM_{10} being doubled.
  - There was an increase in recent asthma attacks, asthma medication use, sleep disruption due to dyspnea and cough, exercise-induced cough, and a decrease in pulmonary function (Golshan *et al.* 2000).

Introduction; Occupational

- California rice farmers reported chronic cough which was associated with hours per year engaged in burning rice stubble
- Rice farmers, compared to the general population, had an increased prevalence of asthma (McCurdy *et al.* 1996).

Introduction

- Epidemiological data indicate presence of RSS-induced respiratory health effects, and larger effects in individuals with respiratory disease.
- No controlled exposure or airway inflammation data in humans.
- Therefore, we designed controlled human exposure experiments to investigate the effects of RSS smoke exposure on airway inflammation in healthy, asthmatic, and allergic individuals.

Hypothesis

- Increased RSS concentration and dose would;
  - Increase airway inflammation (cells, proteins).
  - Decrease pulmonary function (volumes, flows)

- Pre-existing airway inflammation (asthma and allergic rhinitis), would result in increased RSS-induced changes in;
  - Airway inflammation
  - Pulmonary function

Method; Design

- Three controlled human exposure experiments.
  - Healthy subjects
  - Asthma subjects
  - Allergic-Rhinitis subjects
- Single-blind, repeated-measures, randomized.
- Exposure Chamber (control conditions).
- RSS generation and exposure system (UCD).

Rice Straw Smoke Generation System Design

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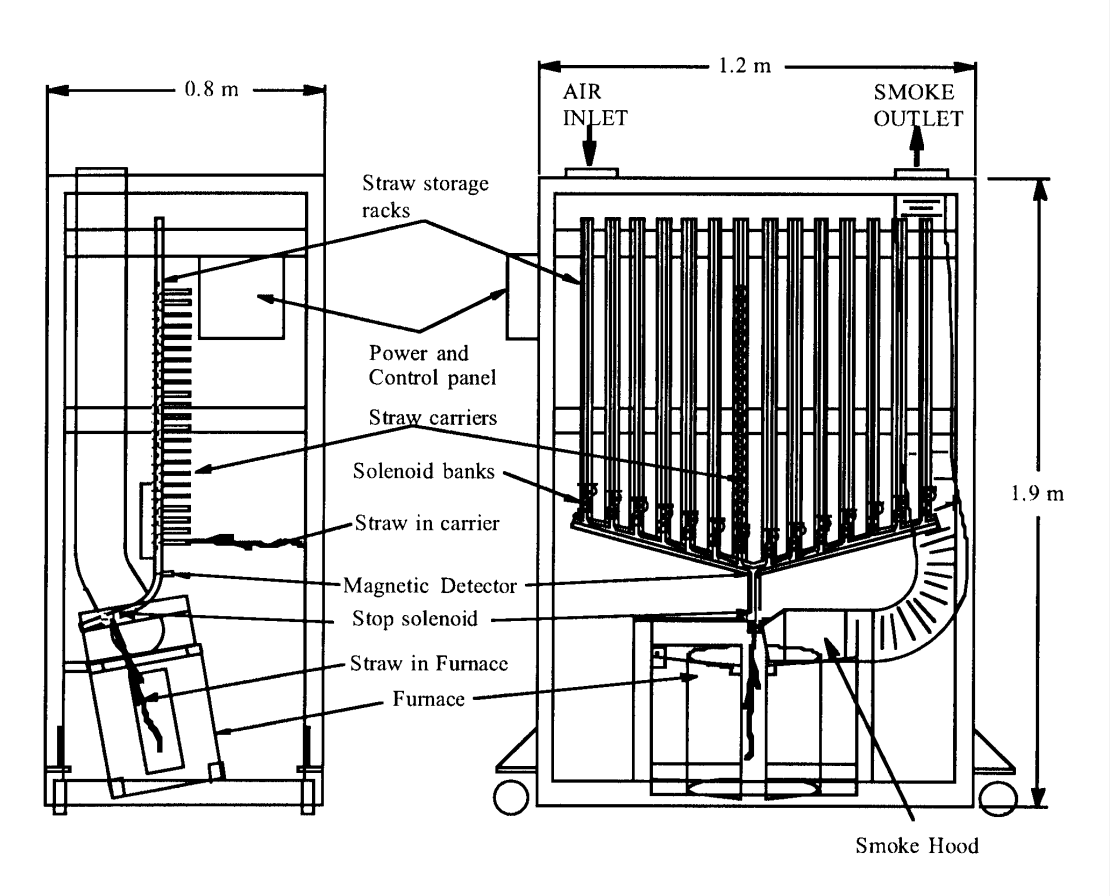
Design Objectives

- Mean particle concentrations of 200 to 600 $\mu g\, m^{-3}$ with good repeatability
  - (900 $\mu g\, m^{-3}$ achieved, 160 to 500 $\mu g\, m^{-3}$ used)
- Automatic operation for exposures ranging 30 min to 3 hours in duration
- Maintain temperature and relative humidity in exposure chamber (20°C, 50%)
- Match field conditions as much as possible (high air-fuel ratio, flame radiation).
- Residence time to approach equilibrium gas-particle partitioning for PAH (3-5 s within 20 K of ambient)
- Not to exceed exposure limits for gases, particularly CO, CO_2.
- Low level exhaust to street (SFGH location).

Rice Straw Characteristics

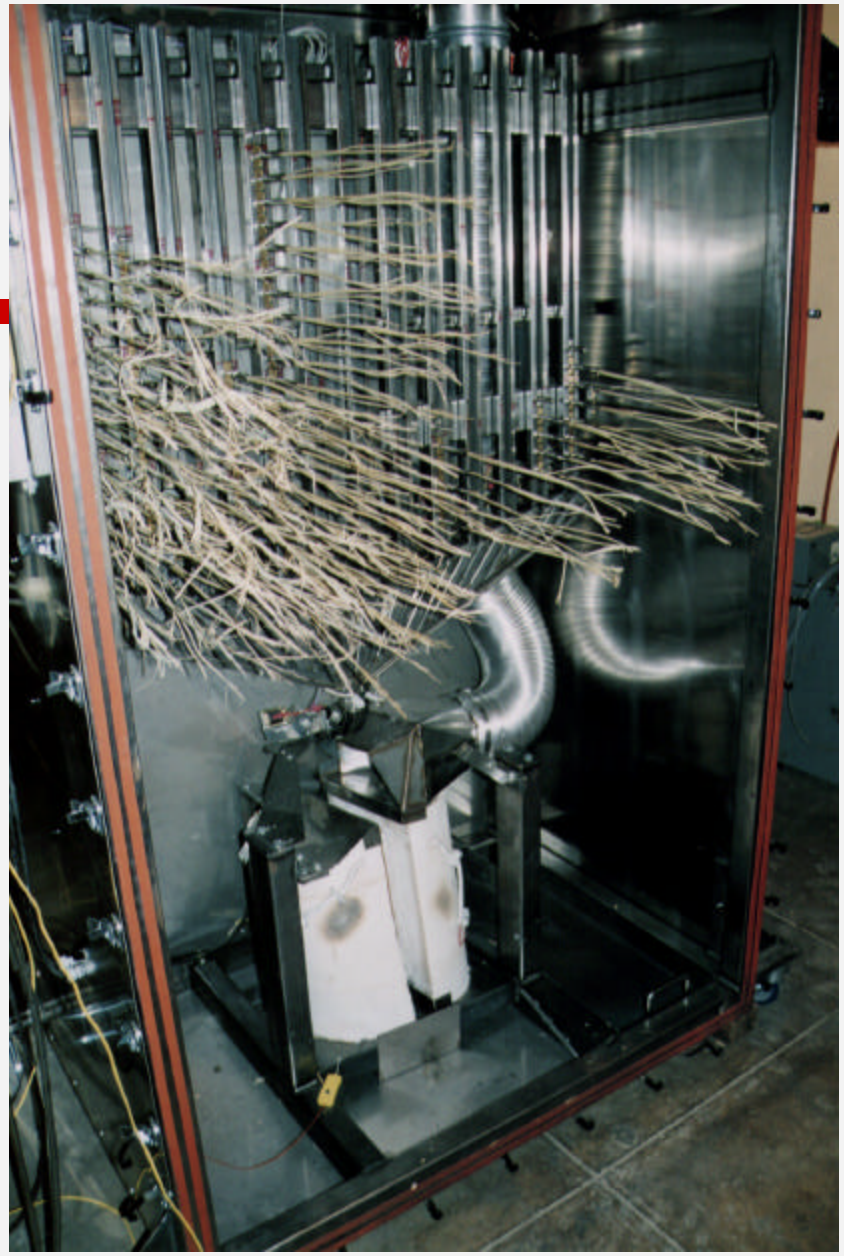
- Stipulated by CARB (Carnahan to Holmes,1998)
- M202 (medium grain Japonica, >50% of California production)
- Standard fertilization practice
- Average yield
- Collected from center of fields to minimize road dust
- No stipulations on moisture content, K, Cl, stem fraction

Singulated-Straw/ Shuttle-in-Rack Design

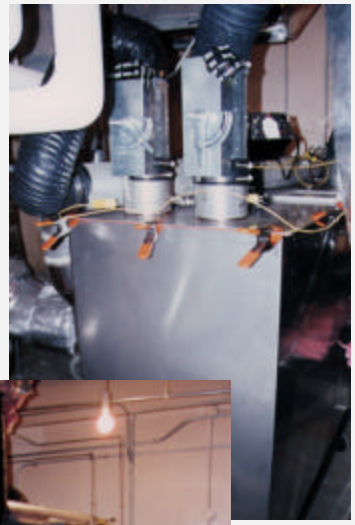


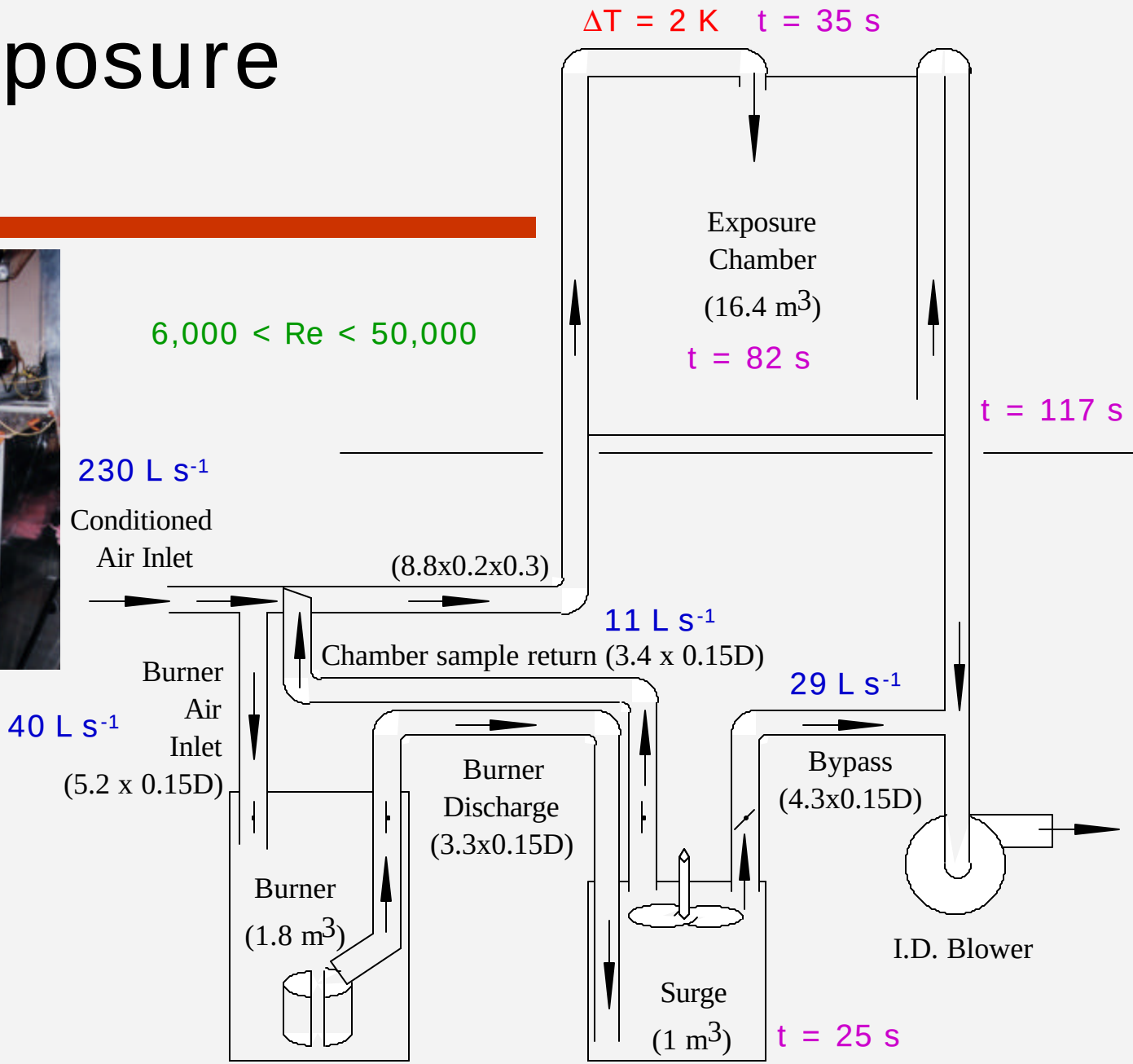
RSS Burner

- 14 rack storage magazine
- 280 shuttles/straws
- Manual preload
- Automatic feed and detect
- Programmable firing interval
- Continuous burner air flow (40 L s^{-1}, <20% of total to chamber), adjustable
- Radiant ignition (4.8 kW, flux = 65 kW m^{-2})
- Minimum design mass air-fuel = 1200
  - >2000 at 45 s
  - >6000 at 140 s firing interval

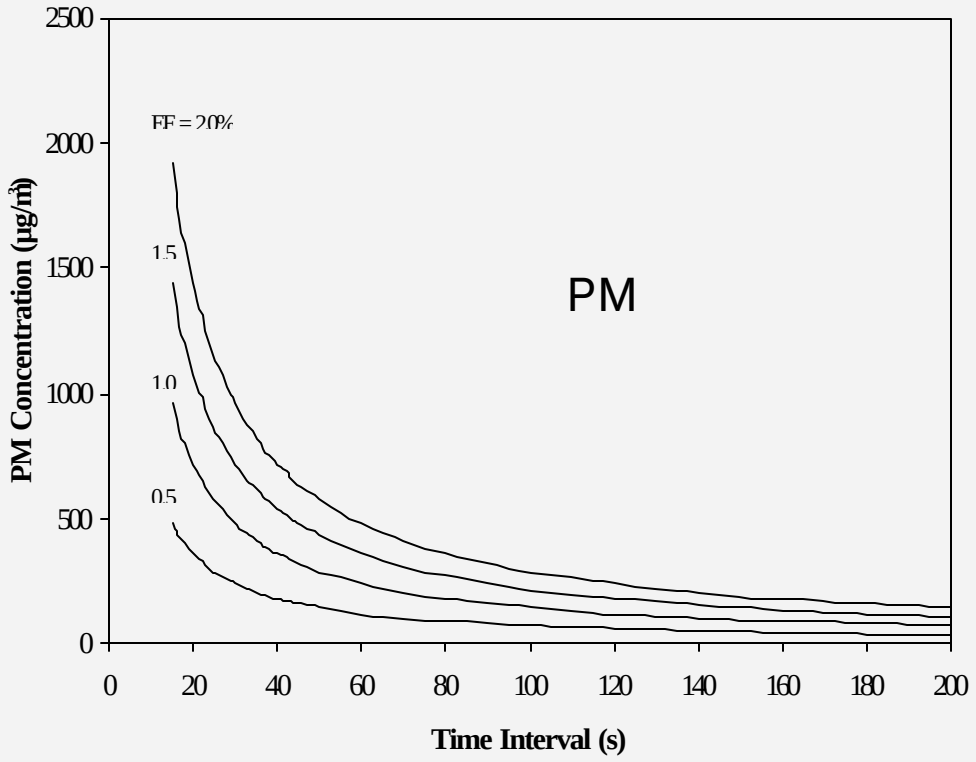


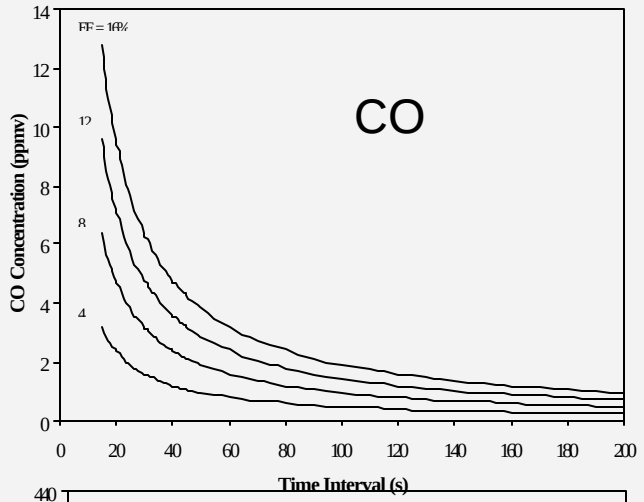
RSS Exposure System

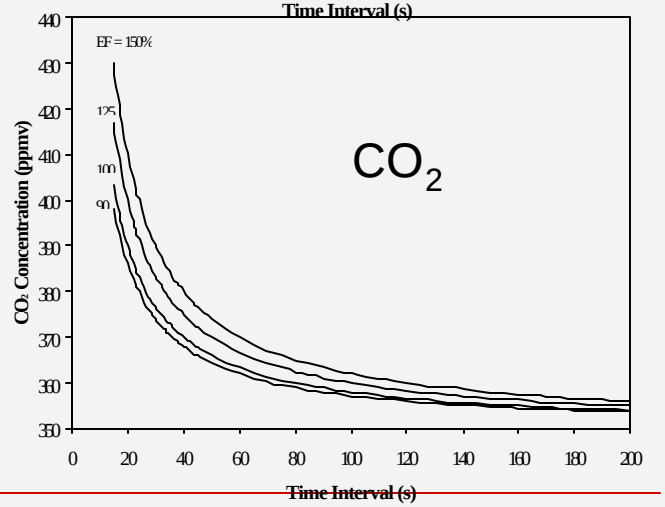




Chamber PM, CO, CO_2 Concentrations





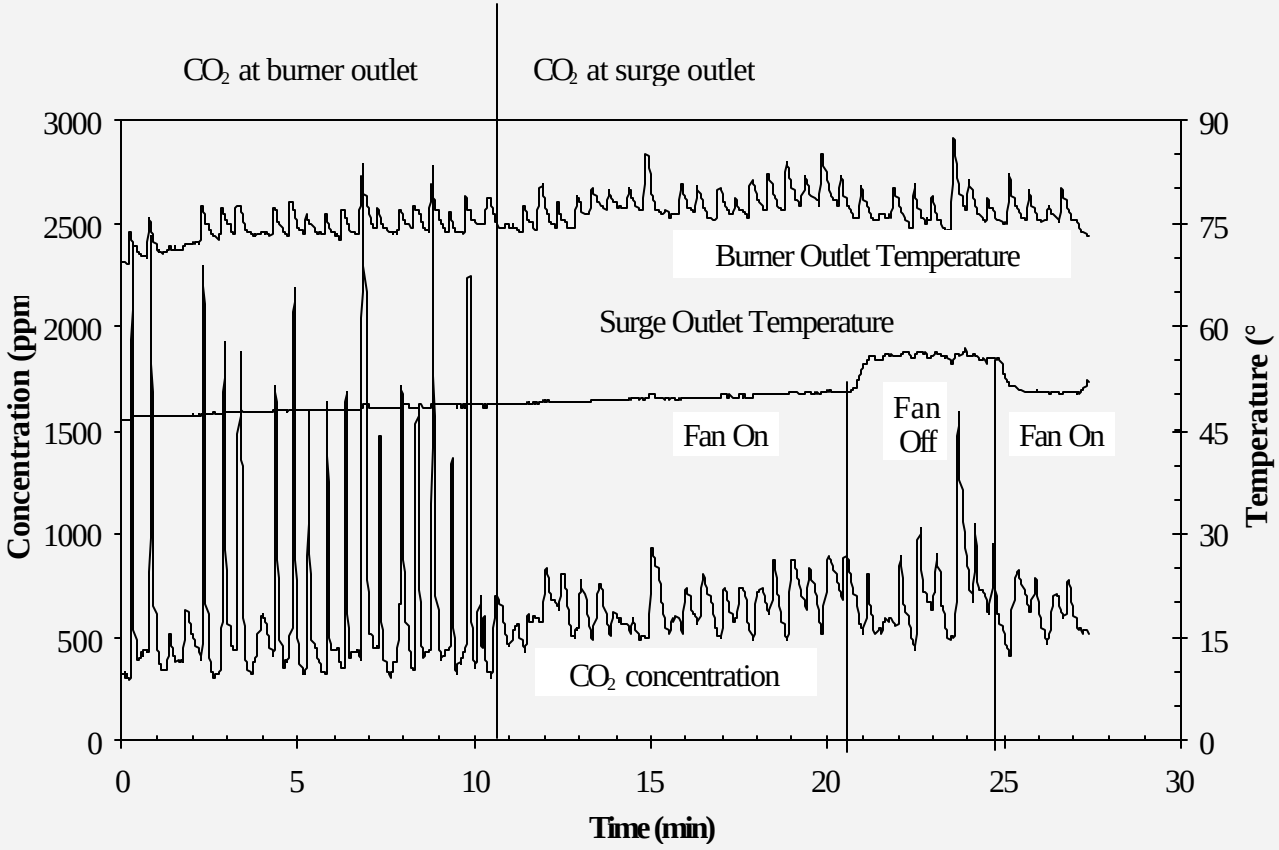


Results from Exposure Tests

	Low Concentration	High Concentration	Serial Day Exposure*
Straw Firing Interval (s)	140	45	140
Target PM Concentration ($\mu g\ m^{-3}$)	200	600	200
Mean PM Concentration ($\mu g\ m^{-3}$)	188	508	158
Number of tests	13	10	5
Range ($\mu g\ m^{-3}$)	274	576	87
Minimum ($\mu g\ m^{-3}$)	93	310	117
Maximum ($\mu g\ m^{-3}$)	367	886	204
Standard deviation	75	202	32
Standard error	21	64	14
95% confidence interval ($\mu g\ m^{-3}$)	± 45	± 144	± 40
Coefficient of Variation (%)	40	40	20

*exposures conducted on same subject on successive days.

Intermittency in burning



Transient Response

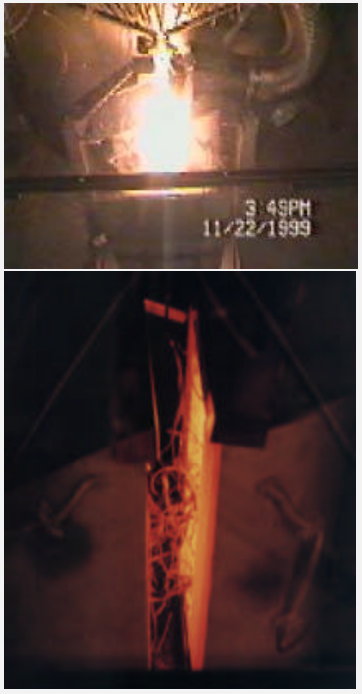
Surge Concentration (well mixed):

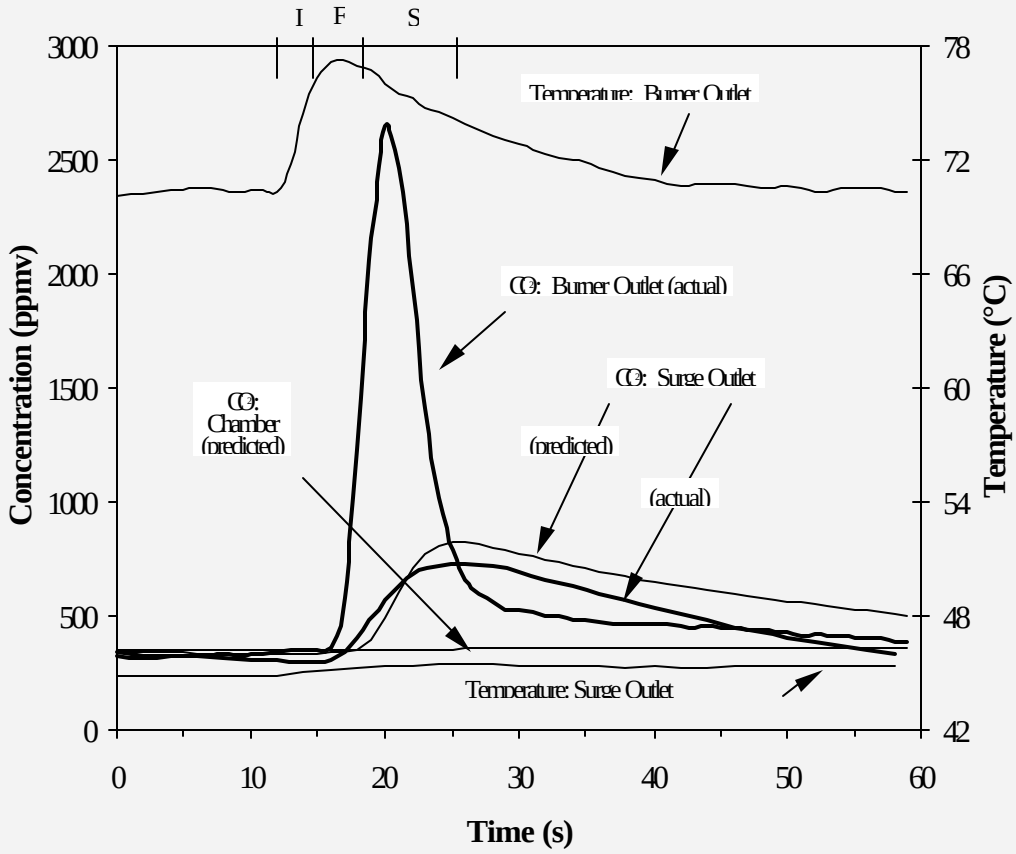
$$\frac{dC_s}{dt} = \frac{\dot{V}_{st}}{V_s}\frac{T_s}{T_{st}}\left[C_b - C_s\right]$$

Chamber Concentration (well mixed):

$$\frac{dC_c}{dt} = \frac{1}{V_c}\frac{T_c}{T_{st}}\left[\dot{V}_{st,s}(C_s - C_c) + \dot{V}_{st,o}(C_o - C_c)\right]$$

Induction, Flaming, Smoldering

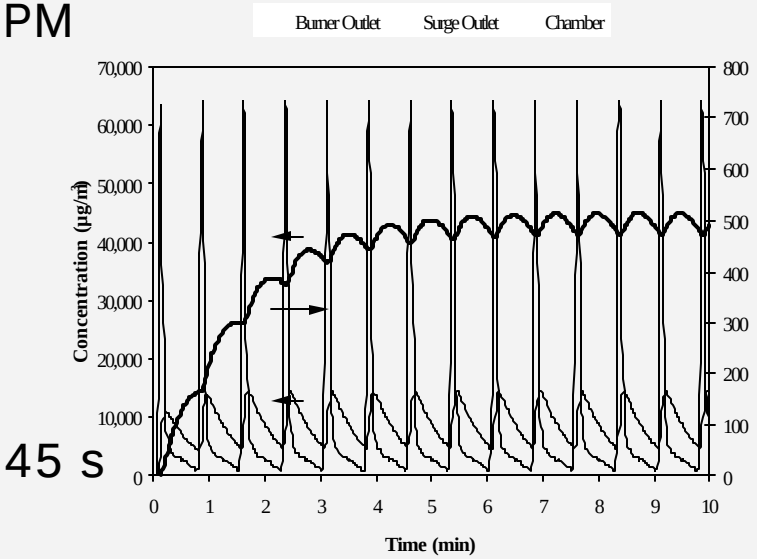




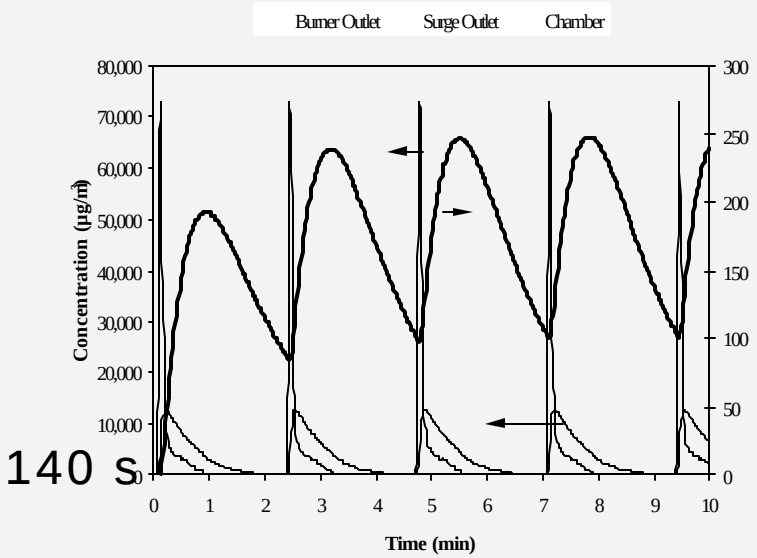
4 s sample lag on concentration, uncorrected

Predicted Concentrations

PM

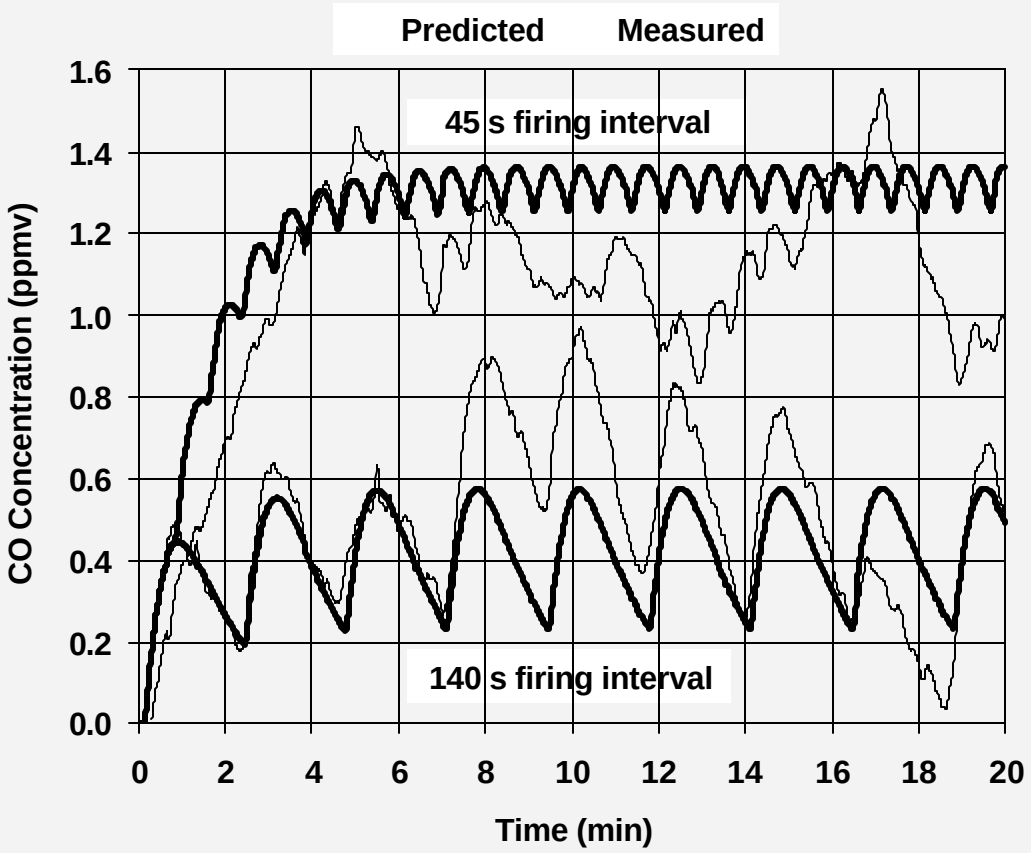


45 s

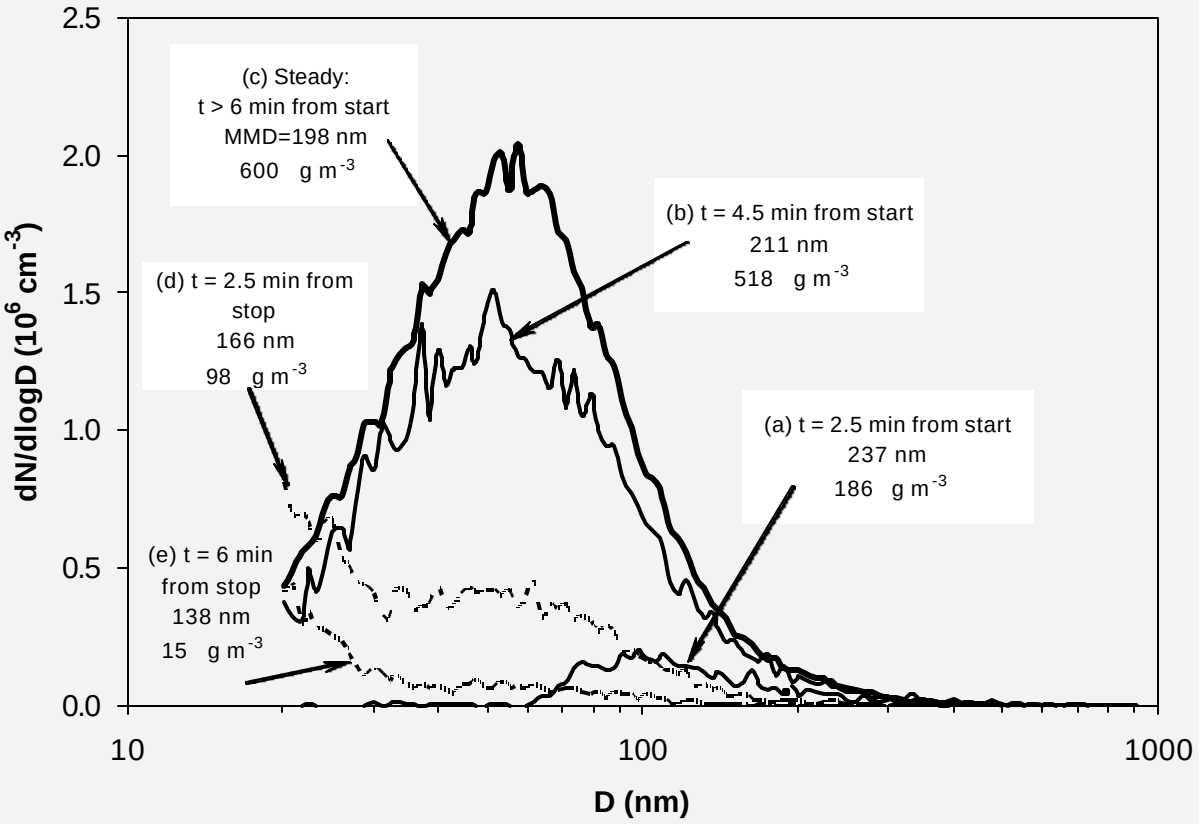


140 s

CO as surrogate
Predicted and Measured in Chamber

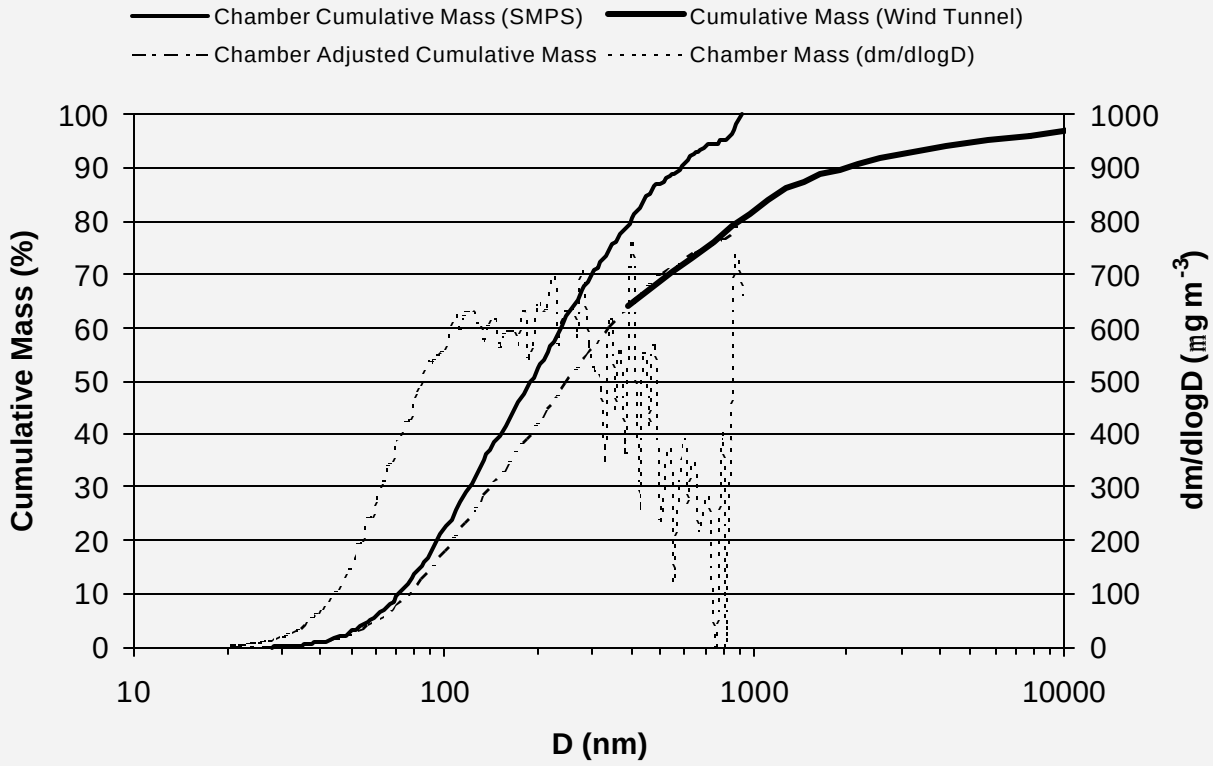


Particle Size Distribution by SMPS



Particle Mass Distribution

Aligned to wind tunnel at 80% mass by SMPS (< 930 µm)



PM Emission Factors
(% dry matter)

RSS Low Concentration (140 s firing interval)	1.89 ± 0.45%
RSS High Concentration (45 s firing interval)	1.65 ± 0.47%
RSS Serial Day Exposures (45 s firing interval)	1.59 ± 0.40%
RSS Aggregated Exposures	1.75 ± 0.25%
Mean Wind Tunnel, all rice straw	0.35 ± 0.10%
Wind Tunnel, similar rice straw	0.65 ± 0.22%
Field Measurements	0.1% to 2.2%
AP-42 (Darley)	0.4%
Predicted from K concentration in straw	0.54%

RSS System Performance

- Target concentrations achieved
- Excellent repeatability
- Similar particle size distributions
- Particle emission factors higher than previously measured in wind tunnel
  - Ignition failures (<10%)
  - Induction period prior to flaming
  - Fire configuration (wind tunnel strictly wind-opposed/backing)
  - Experimental uncertainty
  - Chemical characterization needed to assess implications for study

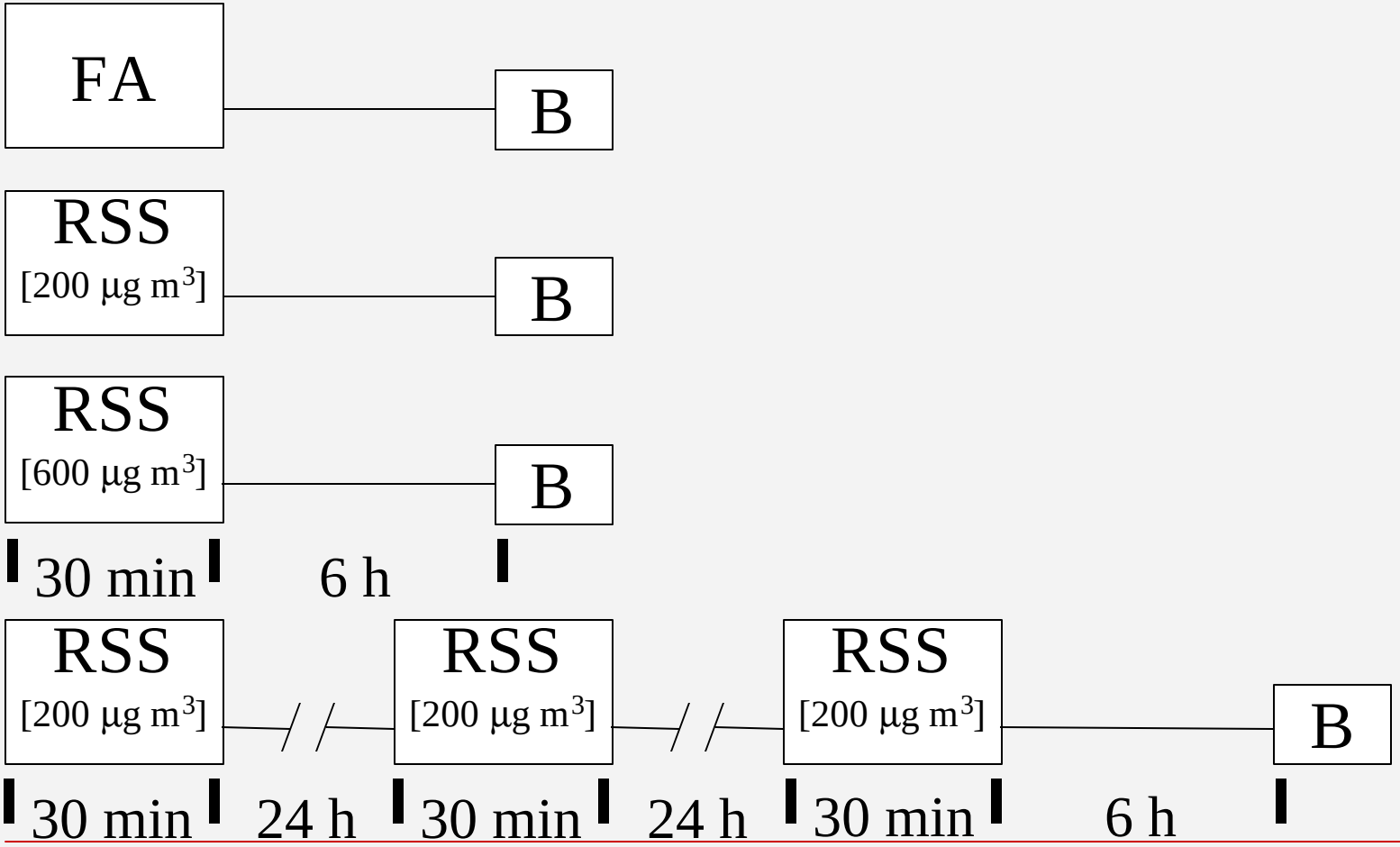
Method; Subjects

- n = 15 per group
- Healthy
  - Females = 5
  - Age (mean ± SD) = 30.6 ± 7.8 yr
- Asthma: PC_{20} < 10 mg ml methacholine.
  - Females = 13
  - Age (mean ± SD) = 31.2 ± 7.8 yr.
- Allergic-rhinitis: positive allergy skin test, symptoms.
  - Females = 9
  - Age (mean ± SD) = 31.7 ± 9.5 yr

Method; Procedures

- Exposure:
  - 30 min, seated at rest, nose clips.
  - Filtered air.
  - RSS; 200 μg m^3.
  - RSS; 600 μg m^3.
  - RSS; 3-days x 200 μg m^3.

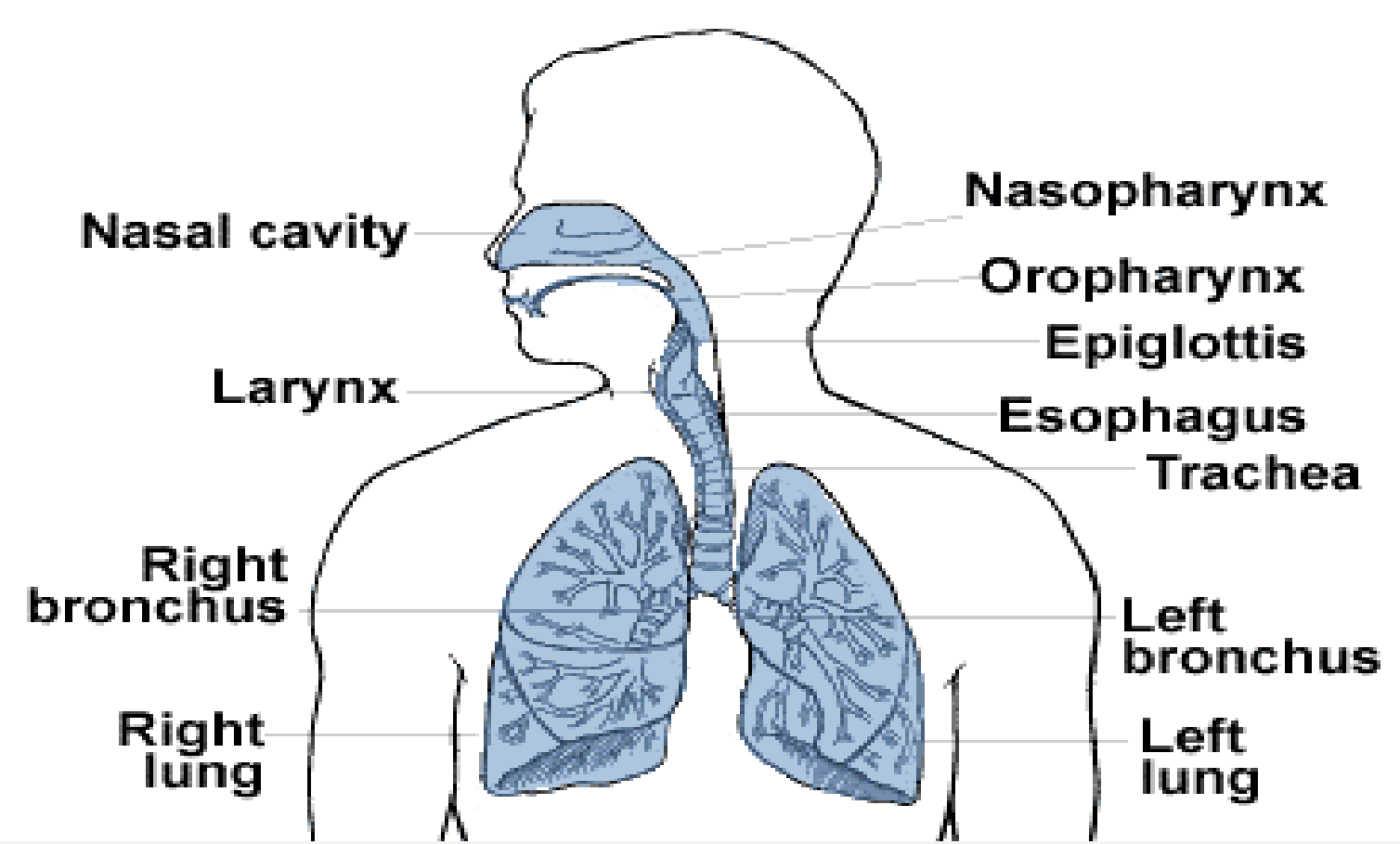
Method; Design



Method; Procedures

- Bronchoscopy:
  - 6 h post-exposure.
  - Bronchoalveolar lavage (BAL; 2 x 50 mL).
  - Bronchial fraction (Bfx; first 15 mL).

Method; Bronchoscopy



Method; Procedures

- Spirometry: Pre- and post-exposure.
- Symptoms: Pre- and post-exposure.

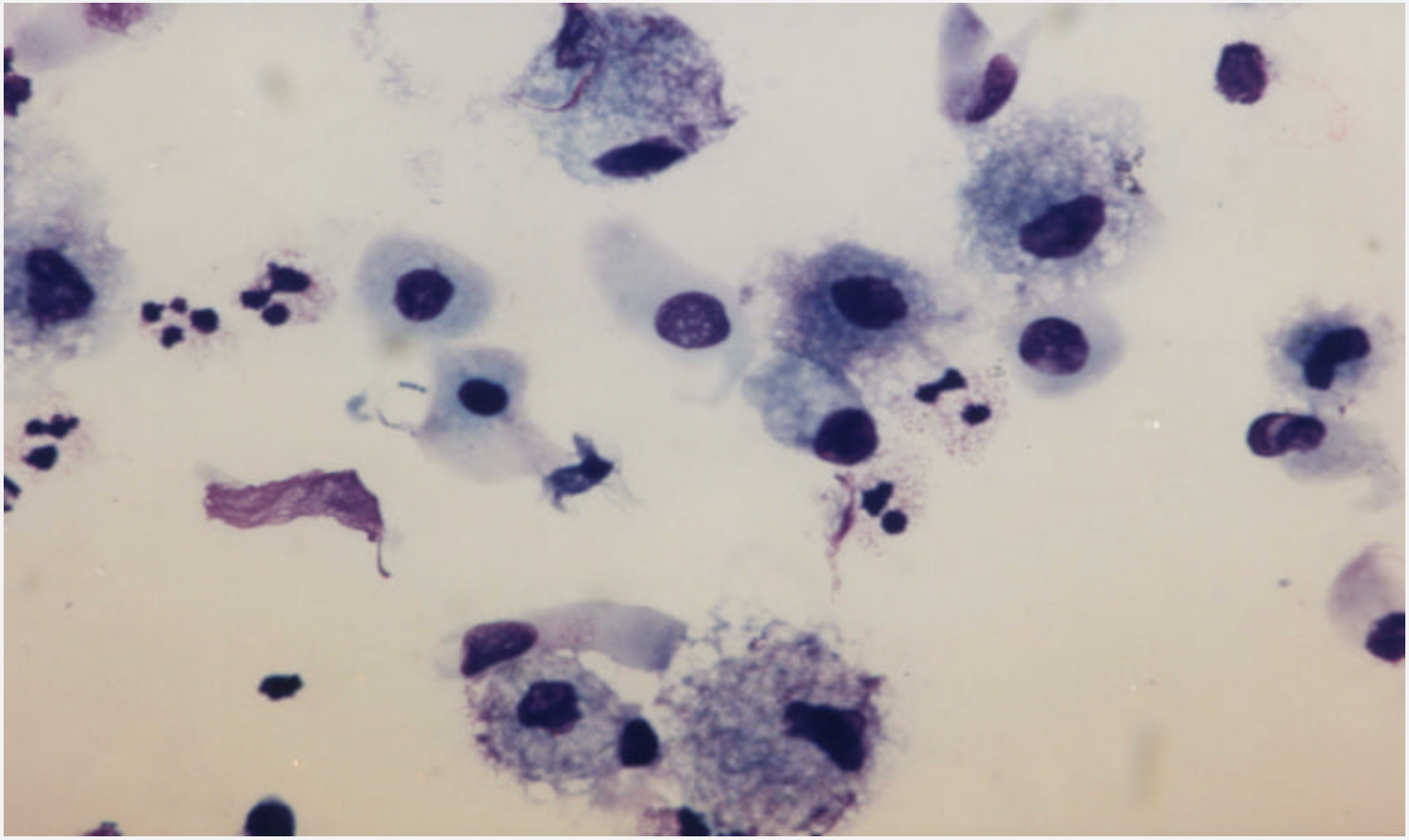
Method: Airway Grading

- Scale:
  - 0 = Normal
  - 1 = Mildly inflamed
  - 2 = Moderately inflamed
  - 3 = Severely inflamed

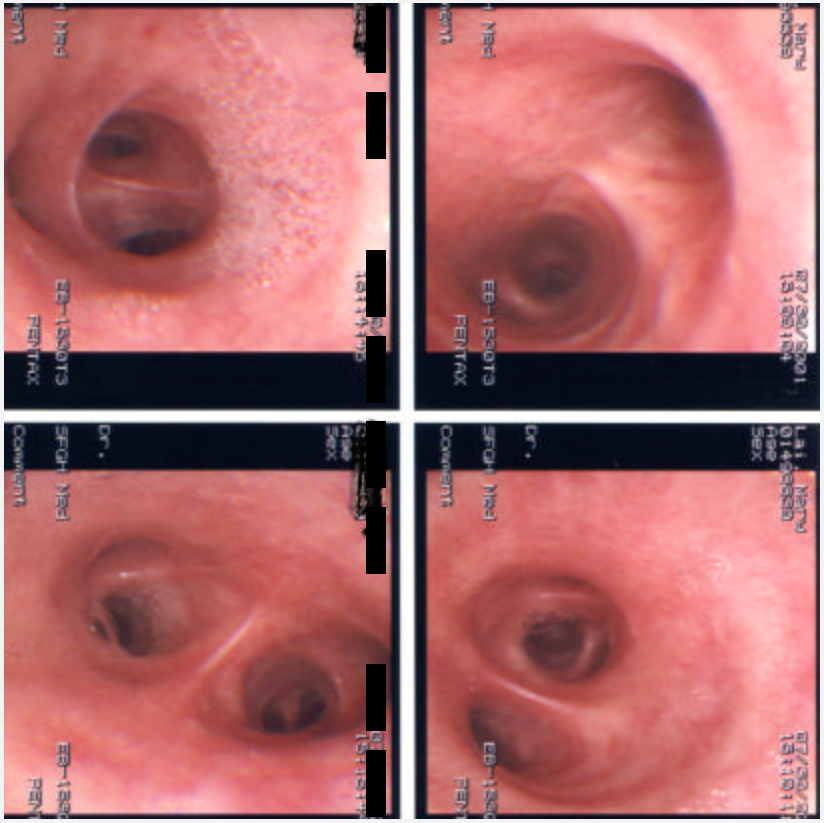
Method; Airway Inflammation

- Cells:
  - Macrophages (particle phagocytosis)
  - Neutrophils (inflammation)
  - Epithelial cells (initial contact; particle uptake)
- Proteins:
  - TNF-α (pro-inflammatory; early response)
  - IL-8 (neutrophil chemo-attractant)
  - MCP-1 (macrophage chemo-attractant)

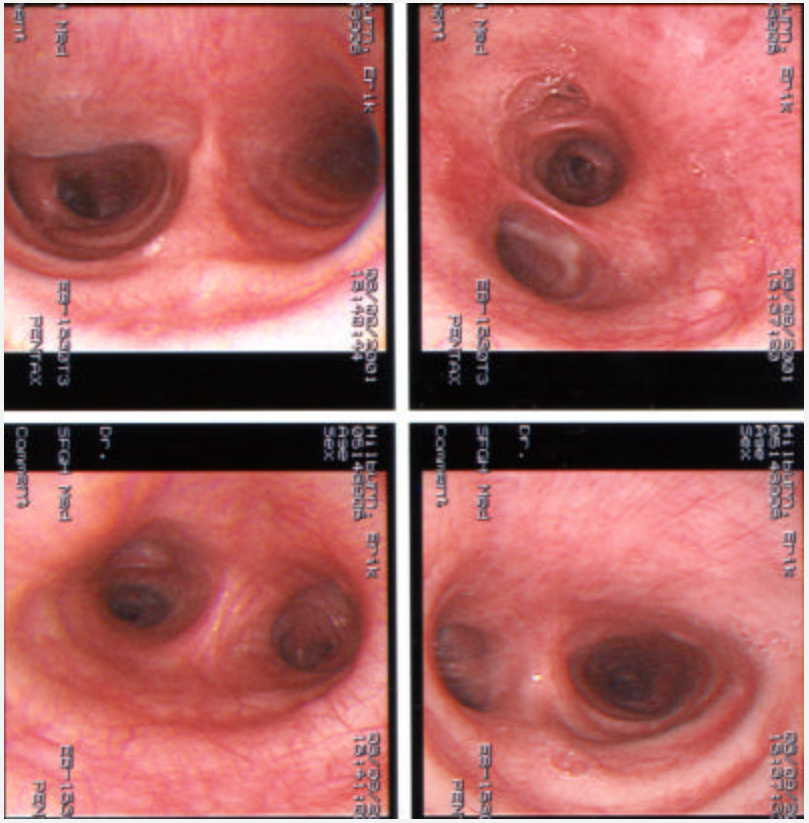
Method; Airway Cells



Results: Airway Grading

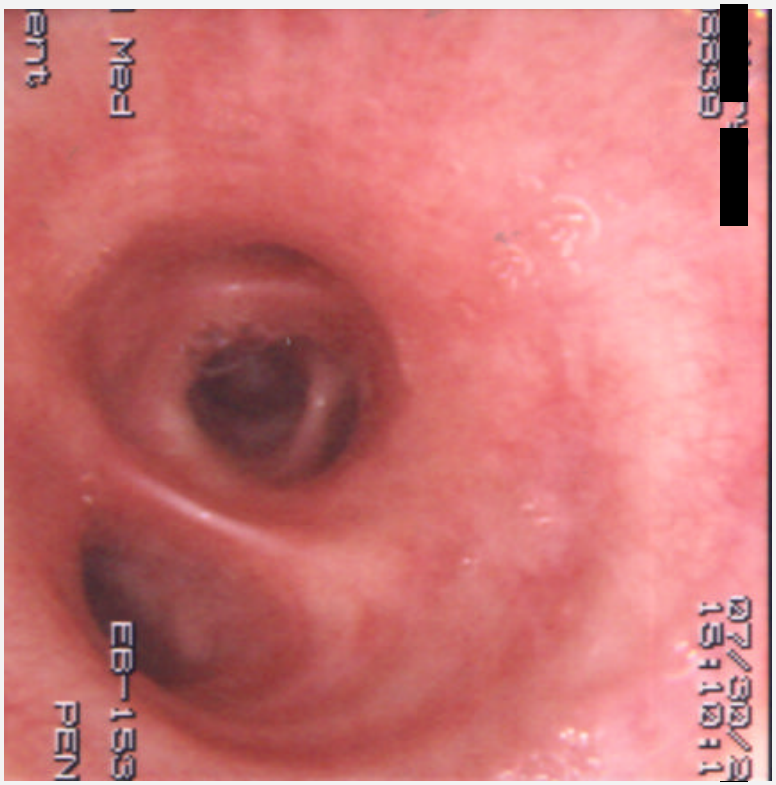


FA (0)

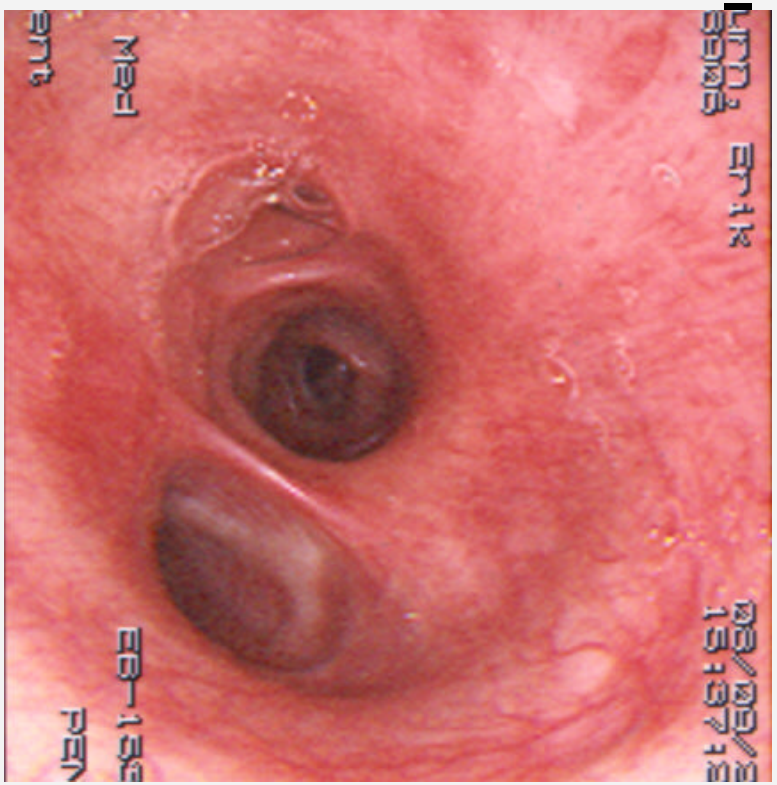


200 x 3 (2)

Results: Airway Grading



FA (0)

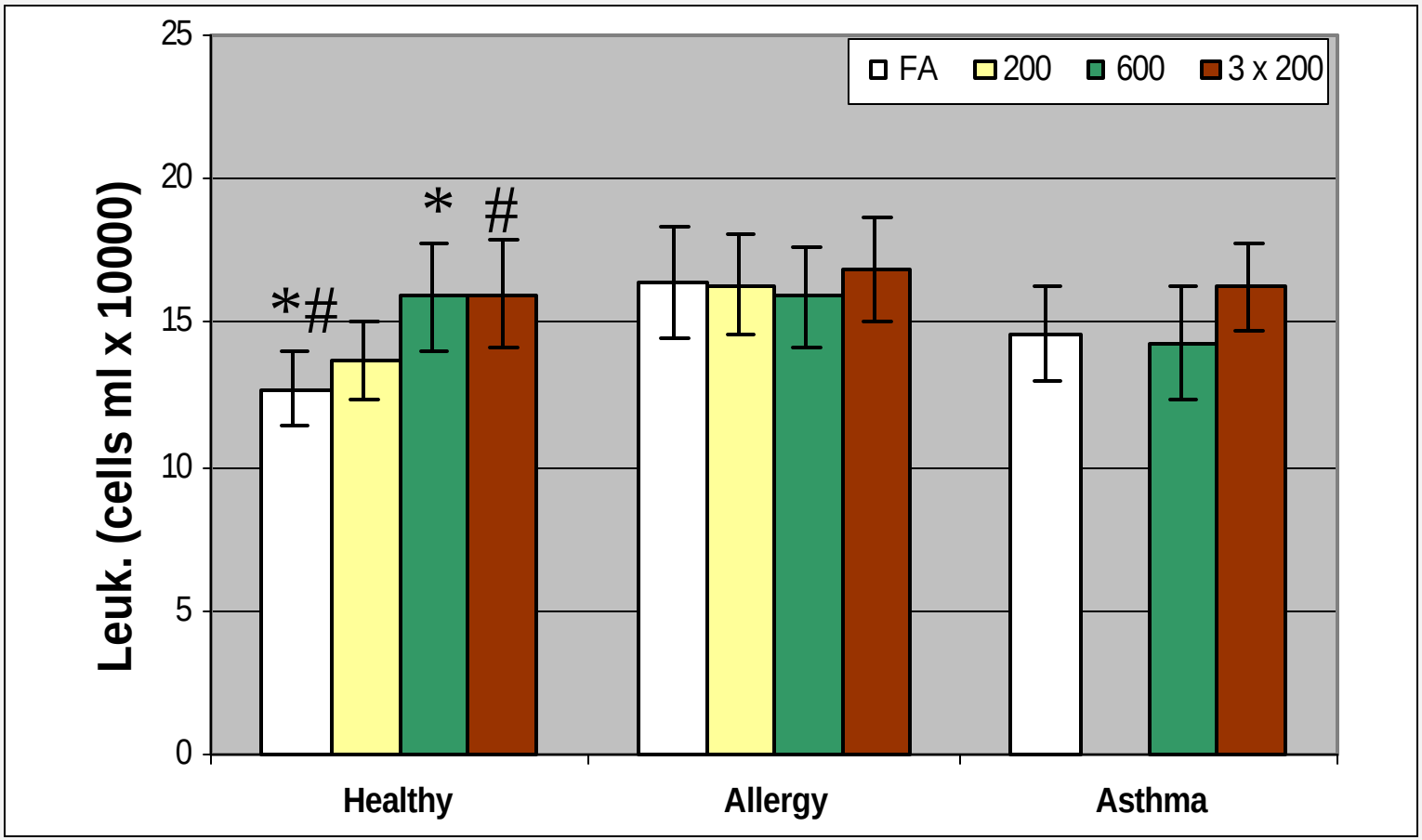


3 x 200 (2)

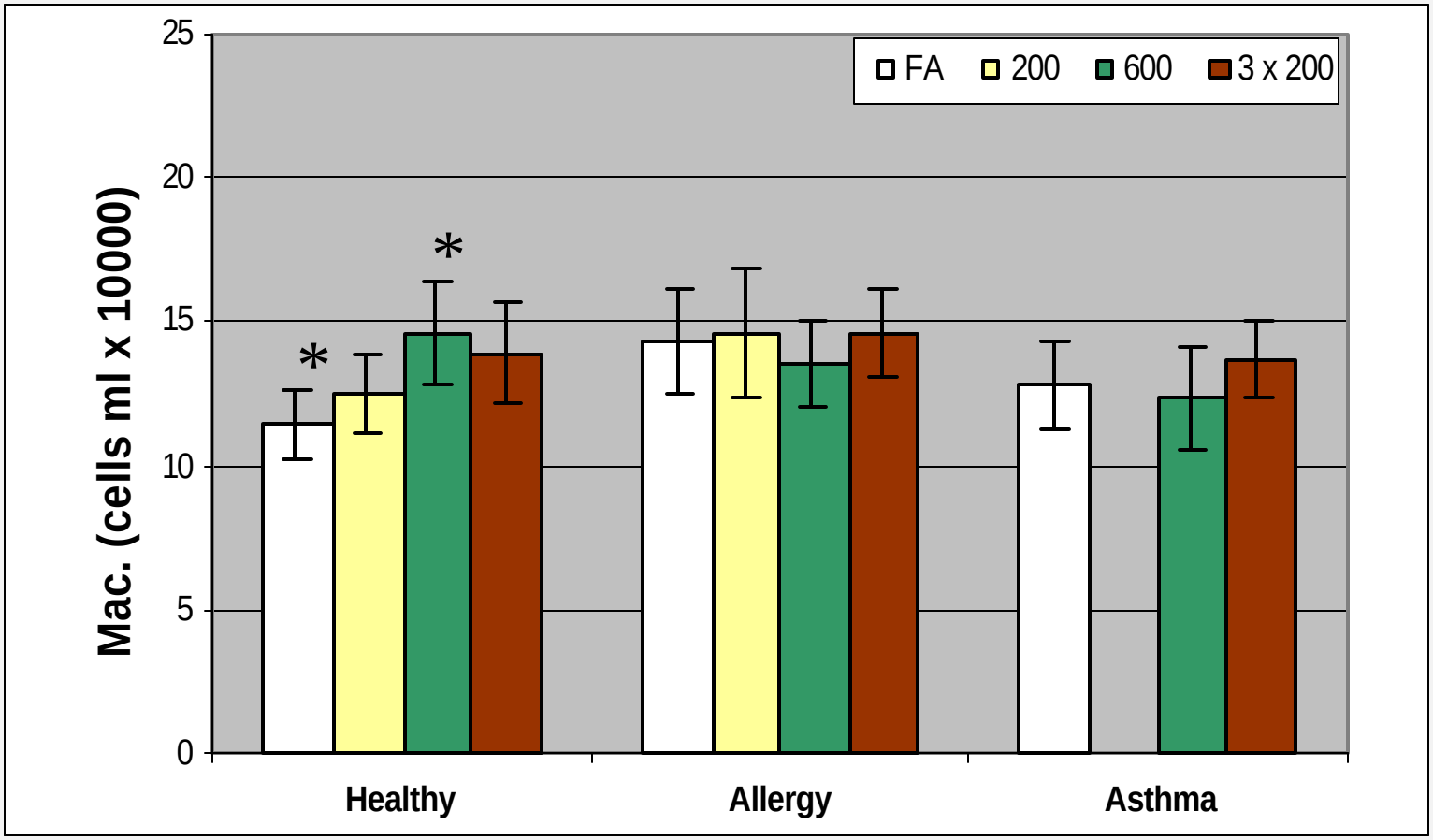
Results: Airway Grading

- Healthy
  - Increased; RSS-600 vs. FA, RSS-3x200 vs. FA
- Asthma
  - No RSS-induced changes (higher baseline)
- Allergic-Rhinitis
  - Increased; RSS-600 vs. FA

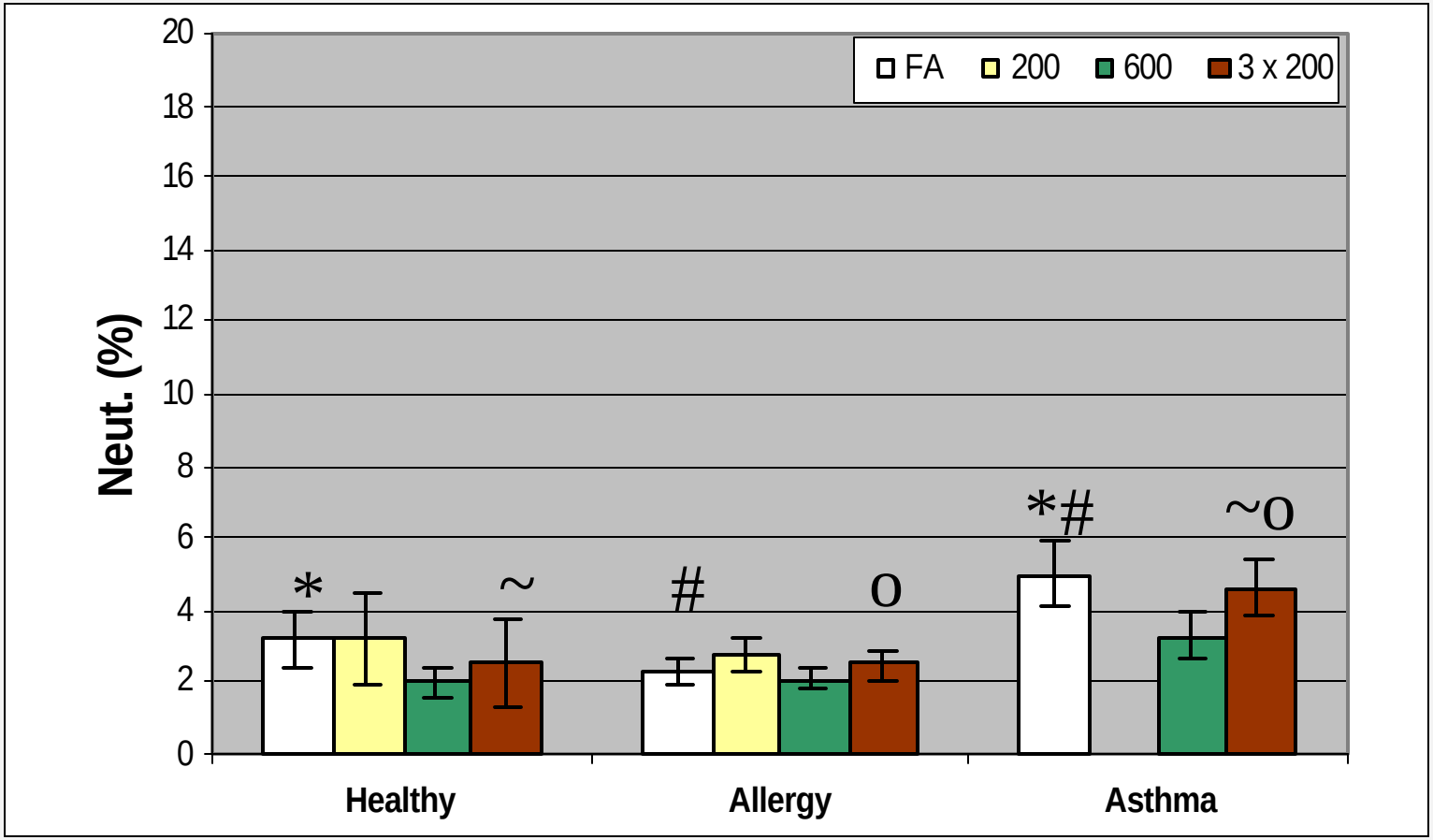
Results; Total Leukocytes (Bfx)



Results; Macrophages (Bfx)



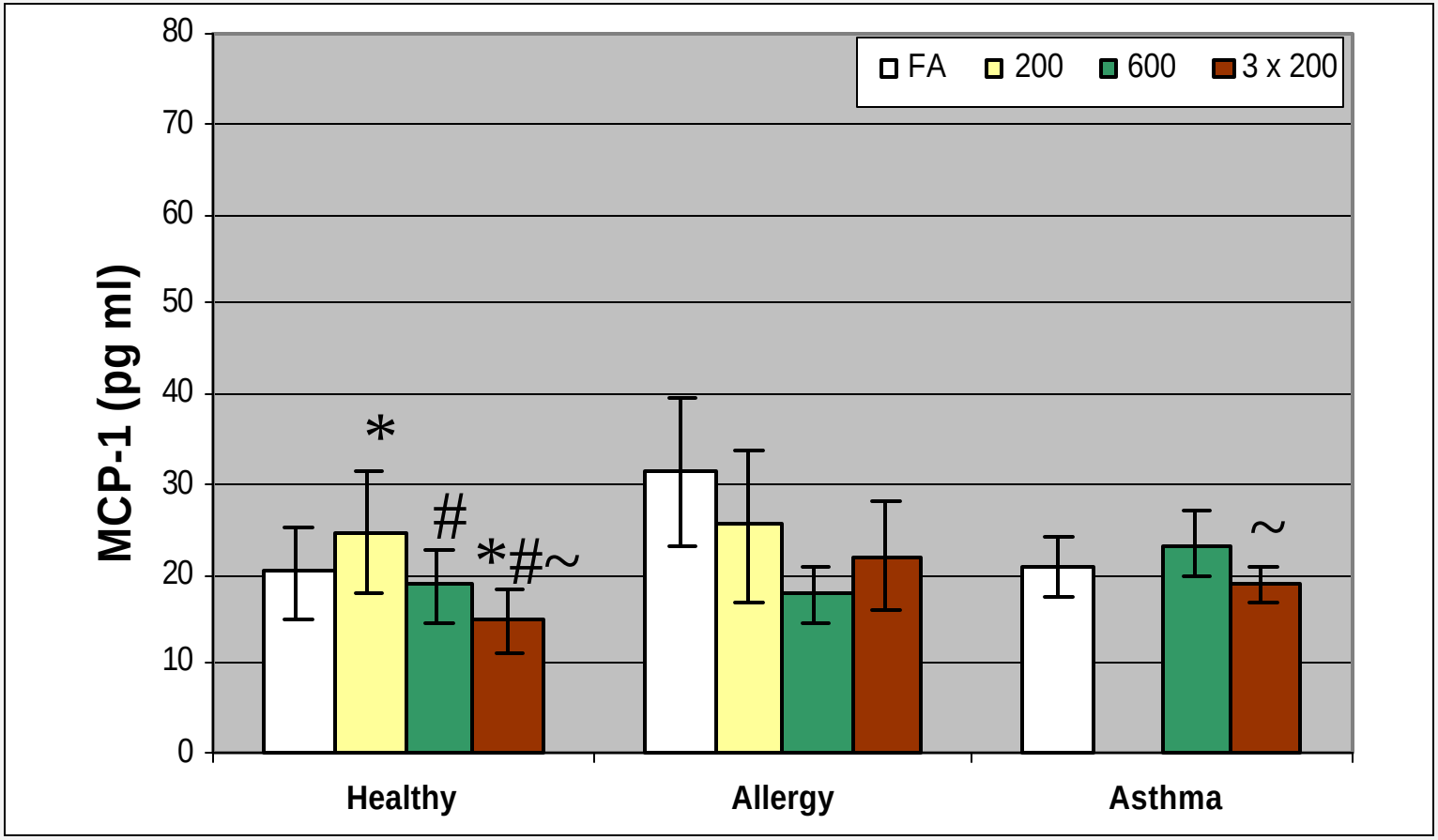
Results; Neutrophils (BAL)



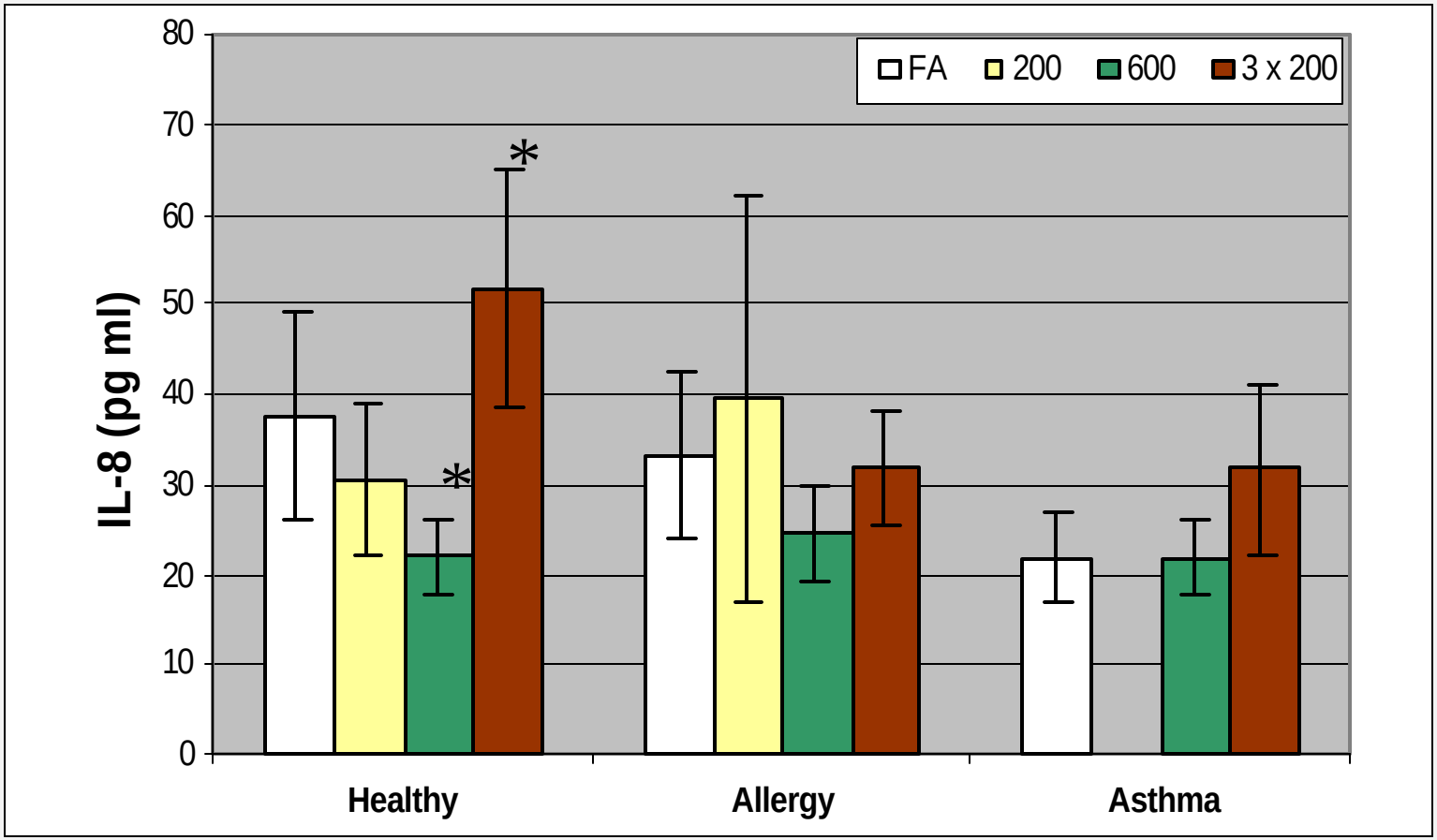
Results; Cells

- Healthy:
  - Increased total leukocytes
  - Increased macrophages
- Asthma:
  - Increased neutrophils
- Allergic-Rhinitis:
  - Decreased epithelial cells (airway injury)

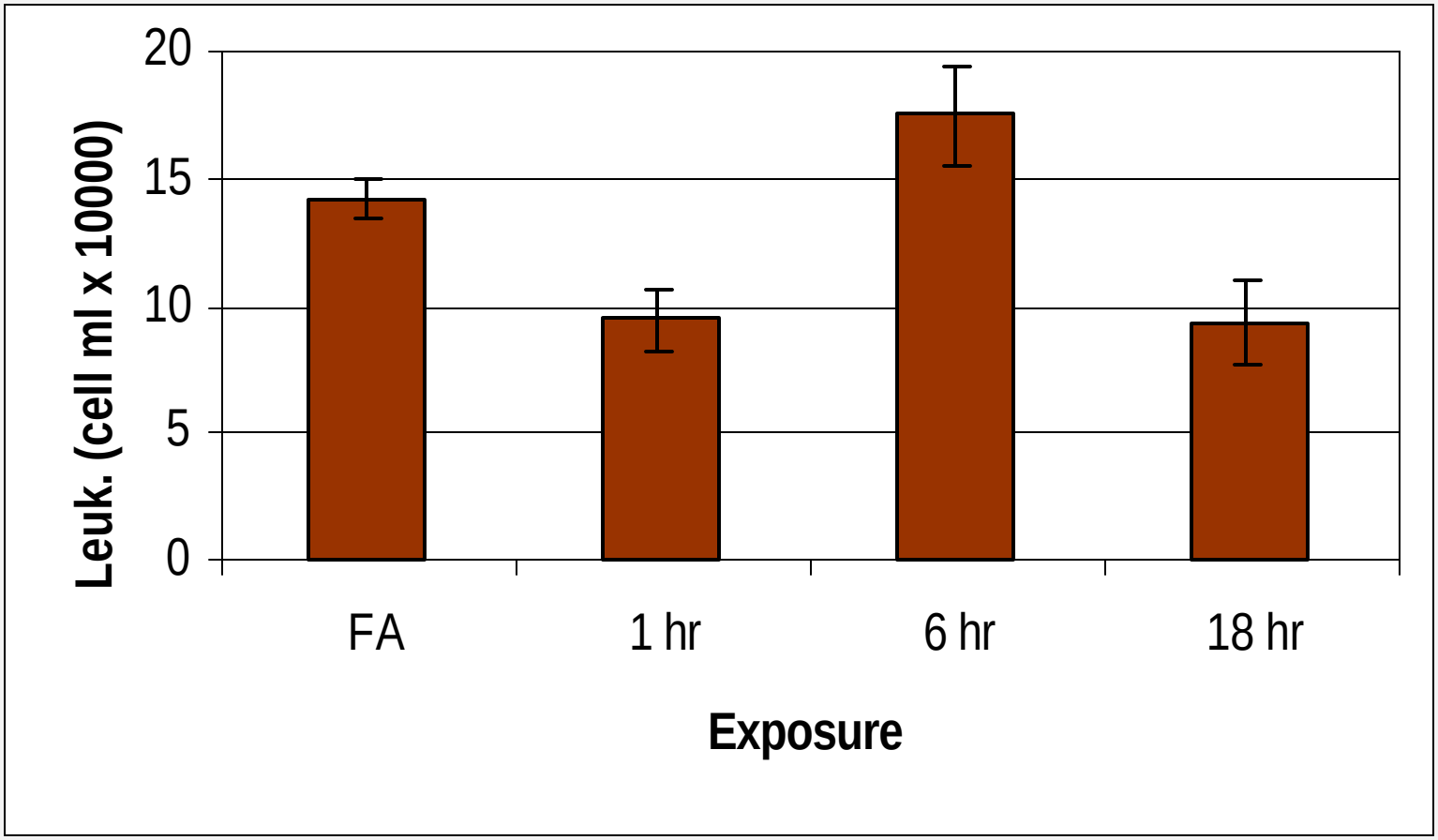
Results; MCP-1 (BAL)



Results; IL-8 (Bfx)



Results; Total Leukocytes (BAL); 1, 6, 18 h (Healthy; RSS-600)



Results

- No changes in RSS-200 $\mu g\ m^3$
- No meaningful changes in pulmonary function
- No changes in subject symptoms

Discussion

- The results of this project indicate that RSS is capable of inducing changes in airway cell distribution in healthy individuals, and in individuals with asthma, or allergic rhinitis.
- The specific RSS-induced changes in cells and proteins were different between the three subject groups.
- Asthma and allergic-rhinitis is associated with elevated inflammatory cells (leukocytes) at baseline. This could actually negate measurement of some RSS-induced inflammation.

Discussion

- The RSS-induced inflammation was present at low exposure doses compared to what could be expected in environmental situations, and compared to other controlled human exposure experiments:
  - 30 min.
  - Rest; no exercise.
  - Controlled human exposures:
    - Ozone (O_3); 0.2 ppm for 4 h x 4 day with exercise.
    - Nitrogen-dioxide (NO_2); 0.4 ppm for 4 h x 3 day with exercise.

Conclusions

- Inhaled RSS is not innocuous; induces airway inflammation.
- Inflammation occurs in the absence of changes in pulmonary function or symptoms (individuals may not remove themselves from the exposure).
- These results could be generalized to other forms of vegetative matter smoke exposure occurring world-wide (forest fires, residential wood smoke).

Future Research

- Delineate the toxic component(s) of smoke from vegetative matter.
- Particle vs. gas phase; essential for specific measurement and regulation.
- Determine threshold concentrations and doses for exposure regulation.

Future Research

- Effects on other susceptible populations, including individuals with cardiopulmonary disease.
- Other fuels: The UCD smoke generation system could be used to generate smoke from various vegetative matter, including other field residues, agricultural prunings, forest waste/biomass, and residential wood burning fuels.

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